



## FACTORS INFLUENCING BOY CHILD DROPOUT FROM PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KINANGOP SUB COUNTY, NYANDARUA COUNTY, KENYA

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### Abstract:

The government of Kenya has placed certain measures to give basic education to its citizens by introducing Free Primary Education and Free Day Secondary Education. Despite this effort, students both boys and girls have been dropping out of school. School dropout for both boys and girls is a very serious issue not only in Kenya but also in the whole world. Studies have been carried out on the girl child and factors that contribute to them dropping out of school. Consequently, the boy child has been neglected. The boy child is consequently threatened and the boy child feels left out. The main purpose for the study was to investigate the factors that influence boy-child dropout from public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county, Nyandarua County. The objectives of the study were to find out how socio-economic, socio-cultural and learner characteristics influence the drop out of the boy-child from public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county of Nyandarua County. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The researcher targeted 26 public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-County, where a sample of 148 respondents comprising of 16 principals and 132 class teachers. The 16 principals were also selected to participate in the study using purposive sampling and simple random sampling to select 132 class teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires and document analysis (school records like registers). The collected data was analyzed using inferential statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V22). The socio-economic, socio-cultural and learner characteristics influence boy-child drop out from public secondary schools. The parents should be encouraged to come up with new strategies of increasing their earnings so as to increase their income and be able to pay fees for their sons. This can be communicated during parents' meetings in the school. The principals of the schools should come up with strategies to promote completion rate among boys in public secondary schools like motivating the boys, guiding and counseling them and starting boy-child welfare that will look into problems faced by boys in school.

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## 1. Introduction

Education worldwide is the finest way of attaining self-reliance, economic growth and development (Gathiga, 2010) as education helps people to resolve inequality and poverty (Mukudi, 2004). Education for All (EFA) is a global commitment that strives to ensure that all children have access to education. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 declares that *"Everyone has a right to education"*. The world conference on Education for All (EFA) held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 sparked off a new motivation towards education for all.

Education has been cited by early economic experts as the corner stone for all economic and social stability within any country (World Bank, 2005). Furthermore, education has the power to alleviate poverty all over the world through developing people's skills that increase personal income and therefore the best way to attain self-reliance in economic growth and development (World Bank, 2004). Education is thus a very basic need and requires good organization so that the set EFA goals may be achieved. However poor organization of EFA resources has made it not to be attained and that's why the boy-child's dropout rate is on the increase (Mukudi, 2004).

The United States Department of Education measurement defines dropout rate as the percentage of 16-24 years old who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential and defines a dropout as a person who has not graduated from high school and is not currently enrolled in fulltime secondary education [National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2011]. For purposes of this project, a dropout is viewed as any student who after being enrolled in public secondary school abandons school completely without sitting for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Failure to complete a basic cycle of secondary school not only limits future opportunities for students but also represents a significant drain on the limited resources that countries have for the provision of secondary education (Sabates, Akyeampong, Westbrook and Hunt, 2010). School dropouts when compared to high school graduates are usually associated with lowered economic gains, lack of access to higher education, reduced tax revenue, poor health outcomes, increased likelihood of legal trouble (GlobalPost, 2014). Dropping out of school is the outcome of a process that begins before high school and students exhibit identifiable warning signs at least one to three years before they dropout (Allensworth, 2005)

Kamanja (2012) argues that the boy-child of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is faced with many problems which unless properly addressed will result in the society losing him. This tremendous boy-child dropout rate is a global problem and researches are being done to curb it. Although there has been progress in improving school participation since 1990 after the world conference on EFA in Jomtien there are still high rates of drop out especially for boys which may be as a result of socio-economic factors in many African countries (Smith, 2011).

Globally, there has been a suppressed progress in reducing the rate at which children drop out of school before reaching the highest grade of primary education. For instance, about 137 million children began primary school in 2011, but about 34 million of them drop out of school before reaching the highest grade of primary education (UNESCO, 2015). According to Kaner (2004), the problem of boy-child drop out globally is on the rise. He points out that both high and low social classes of people are affected by the drop out of boys from school. According to his study, 30 % of students in United States leave school before completing the intended education cycle. A research carried out by Siddhu (2011) found that India has boy dropout rate of 12% while Asia has boy dropout rate of 5%.

Ricardo Sabates (2010) suggested that ill-health, malnutrition, and poverty have been some of the reasons to school dropouts among students. Regions like South and West Asia are said to have similar problems. It was revealed that Pakistan has the same problem particularly in the primary education system (Gulbaz et al., 2011). A study in Pakistan indicated that about 50% drop outs rates for both girls and boys (Khan, 2011), while a study in Philippine revealed different reasons to school dropouts including loss of personal interest in school, a high cost which comes with obtaining education and looking for employment (Orbeta, 2010).

Likewise, Sub-Saharan Africa is no exception, a number of scholarly studies have shown worrisome reports wherein 2007 to 2012 the number of girls dropped out of school had increased from 12 to 15 million in Sub-Saharan countries (Msoke, 2012). Previous studies have identified rural population to be the most affected by the school dropout problem.

A study conducted in Kenya by Muganda and Omondi, (2010) indicated that students in rural areas particularly girls easily drop out of school compared to those in urban areas because of undesirable cultural forces prevailing in their families and communities. Ernest (2014) also points out that Ghana has the problem of school dropouts despite the government's efforts to lower the problem.

The situation is quite similar in Tanzania, according to Basic Education Statistic in Tanzania report (BEST) (2011): in the year 2007 a total of 448,448 students joined secondary school but it was only a total of 190,186 students who were able to complete their ordinary level of secondary school in 2011. This indicates that about 258,262 had dropped out of school in a span of three years. A study on the causes of school dropouts in secondary school in Tanzania pointed out several reasons to school dropouts including; lack of awareness on education matters, high poverty in families, cultural aspects such as early marriages, divorce, polygamy, lack of family planning and negative attitudes towards education especially for girls and parents deaths (Kaling, 2013).

Further research on the similar subject added that, students' drop out of school for various reasons including; the lack of financial support, loss of parents, parents being sick, poor performance, pregnancy, early marriage and rape (Rwechungura, 2014).

According to Mutwol (2013), overall wastage rates in Kenya ranges from 30% - 40 %. This is very discouraging because the government uses a huge amount of public expenditure on education. According to 2011 economic survey report, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) takes the lion's share of the budget. For example, in the financial year 2002 – 2003 the ministry was allocated 64.1 Billion shillings, with this figure rising to 193.3 billion shillings in the financial year 2010 – 2011 (Mudemb, 2013).

Findings from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology reveal that not all the students who enroll in secondary schools finish with their education cycle (MoEST, 2007). It is thus clear that some students drop out due to varying individual reasons. It has already been noted that a high number of dropouts in the public secondary schools are boys. Moreover, despite the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) disbursement and bursary allocations to the needy students (boys) in public secondary schools, students have continued to drop out (MoEST, 2007). This massive dropout of boys is thus a cause for alarm.

A report by Aggrey Namisi that appeared in The Standard Newspaper, November 8th 2013 showed that the dropout rate of girls in Kenya is 2% while that of boys is 2.1%. Although this has been observed, not many studies have been done to establish the cause of boy-child dropouts from public schools, hence creating need for more study in the area of why many boys than girls drop out of secondary school. The high dropout rate of boys means that the resources used for providing education for that particular child are wasted because they have not acquired the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude to effectively participate in the total development of the nation (Parr, 2013). This wastage due to the dropping out of boys from school has caused concern to the government, educators and all other education stakeholders.

According to Vision 2030, Kenya has declared education as basic to all children. It has been passed as law that each child should attend school and any person who fails to take his/her child to school will have committed an offence and can be taken to court (Business Diary, Feb 12th 2013).

Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, & Pagani (2009) observe that causes of boy-child wastage vary from one place to another. World Bank (2004) called for various studies on drop out to be carried out in various regions and come up with ways of minimizing the dropout rates and improving efficiency in education. Kenya has not been left out in this research of dropout of boys from public secondary schools. The media carefully pointed out that due to the emphasis on girl education and the rerouting of girls back to school, the dropout rate of girls had declined while that of boys had gone up (Karabo & Natal, 2013).

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Dropout of boys in Kenyan public schools has been on the higher side in spite of the government's effort to attain universal education by introducing free public secondary education. Providing this free service means that children will be motivated in attending school without being sent back home for lack of school fees. Many Kenyans

thought that by doing away with school fees children would be retained in schools hence minimizing the boy dropout rate (Oteyo & Kariuki, 2009). As much as enrolment of students in Kenyan Secondary Schools is high a major challenge still lies in the ability to retain the enrolled boys in public secondary schools. In Kenya the national completion rates have been on the decline for the last two decades for boys and not so for girls (The Standard Newspaper, November 8, 2013).

The government of Kenya spends a lot of money on free day secondary education. According to Mutwol (2013) the economic survey of Kenya indicates that MOEST takes the lion's share of the national budget. This is to support free primary education and free day secondary education. Expenditure on education accounts for a significant portion of the county's resources. For example, in Kenya 2012-2013 year's budget, education sector was allocated 233.1 billion which is 16% of the total budget of 1,459.9 billion. Among the allocations 8.3 billion went to free primary education, 19.7 billion went to free day secondary education, 1.6 billion went to early child development education, 118.7 billion went to teachers' salaries and 84.8 billion went to other projects including research (Ramsey, 2012). Failure to address factors affecting boy-child school dropout will mean that government resources are wasted and therefore the need for this study.

Over the years the boy-child has become vulnerable and endangered as far as education is concerned (World Bank, 2005). A report from the District Education Officer (DEO) Kinangop sub-county education office on enrolment and dropout (2013) indicated that more boys than girls are dropping out of school, a matter of concern for this study. In the last four years (2010 – 2013) there has been a consistently high dropout rate among boys from public secondary schools within Kinangop sub-county. Most of the studies have been carried out on the girl child and factors that contribute to them dropping out of school. Consequently, the boy child has been neglected. However, reports have shown that the boy child is consequently threatened and the boy child feels left out. Hence the research sought to determine the factors that are leading to the drop out in the boys from schools. This trend is an indication that the number of boys in public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county is consistently declining and therefore the need to investigate factors contributing to boy-child drop-out in public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county.

## **1.2 Objectives of the study**

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- 1) To determine the relationship between social economic factors and boy-child drop-out in public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county.
- 2) To establish the influence of social-cultural activities and boy-child drop-out in public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county.
- 3) To determine the influence of learner characteristics on boy-child drop-out in public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county.

### **1.3 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by Theory of Hierarchy of needs by Maslow (1954), who viewed the operation of human needs accruing at different levels from the most basic needs to those at the highest levels. That the basic needs which were physiological had been catered for before achieving those at the higher levels. School dropout was high due to the increasing poverty levels of households hence deter their ability to meet the costs. It is therefore an issue of concern as there is a struggle between the opportunity cost and time to be in school.

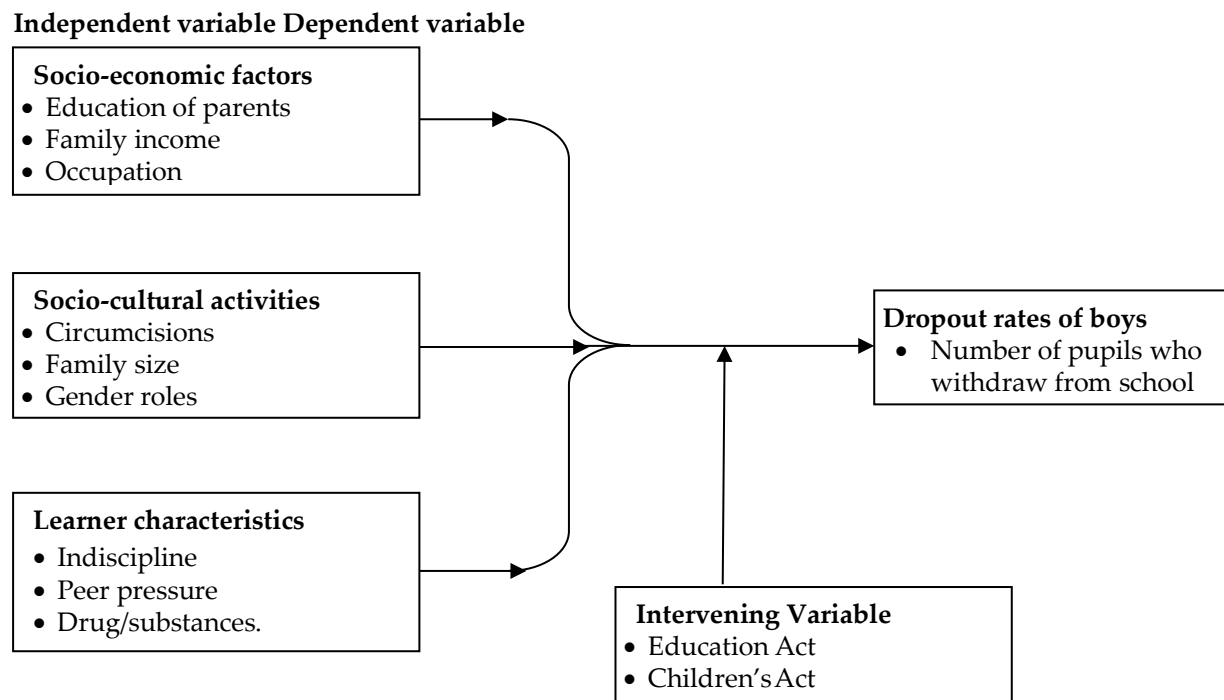
Jon (2005) defines theory as a set of interrelated concepts, assumptions and generalization that systematically describes and explains regularities in behavior. Jon (2005) further adds that research is inextricably related to theory; therefore, many of misconceptions and ambiguities surrounding theory are reflected in the interpretation of the meaning and purpose of research. Therefore, it was explicit that a suitable theory be identified to guide the study as hereunder expounded.

The society also contributed to dropout rate among boys by providing income generating opportunities to school-age going children. All these was due to the poverty that derails the parent's efforts in providing the physiological needs such as food, clothing, shelter and health as Maslow put it. As such these needs became a burden to households; provision of school necessities equally became a problem resulting to temporary withdrawal, which in the long run led to permanent dropout. Boys who suffered from ill health and poor nutrition were inclined to attend school irregularly, were more likely to repeat grades, and eventually dropout. Poor health made it impossible for boys to maintain motivation and sufficiently high levels of concentration; and had also been found to result in poor cognitive function. (Roso & Marek, 1996)

### **1.4 Conceptual Framework**

The study was guided by the conceptual framework outlined in Figure 1 below which showed the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables and the outcome of their interaction. The independent variables were the socio-economic, socio-cultural and learner characteristics. The dependent variable was the dropout rates of boys from public secondary schools. The intervening variable was the government policies, Education Act and Children's Act.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



The factors were assumed to be interrelated in that each category and may influence boy-child to make the decision to either drop out of school or not. The conceptual framework aimed at showing the interrelationship between the variables that determine the dropout of boy-child from public day schools. The independent and the dependent variables related to each other directly as shown in the conceptual framework above. If the intervening variables were applied and enforced to the independent variables then the dependent variable had a positive change.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Concept of Dropout

A dropout refers to a person who leaves school or college before they have finished their studies. It also refers to children who are enrolled but stay out of school for a long time and do not complete the given cycle in school. In some cases, it may also mean that enrolled students leave school before completing the intended education cycle. The degree of boy-child dropout varies between and within countries (Abuya, Oketch & Musyoka, 2013). According to Ananga (2011), the boy-child of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is faced with many problems that make him drop out from school. This problem of boy-child drop out worldwide has pushed many people to do research on why boys drop out of school and try to search for ways of curbing the problem.

In America, educational systems are losing half of the students through school dropout. A recent study by the US Department of Education found that 3% of American students were dropping out or failing to graduate in the nation's largest public district

schools (Education Alliance, 2010). School dropout especially for boys is widely recognized as a negative event followed by various life problems. Several factors for dropping out have been identified in the past researches. Saliwanchik-Brown (2009), for example found that family socio-economic factors, family composition, student engagement in school, retention and age all contributed to boy-child drop out.

Between (2008) in his study on drop out identified how socio-economic status, low parental education, low family income and single parent families led to dropout. However, in dropout review done by Pharris-Ciurej, Hirschman & Willhoft (2012), it was found that grade retention is the strongest predictor of boy's dropout. In general status attainment and drop out literature points out three main factors predictive of school success. Researchers are therefore urged to assess the importance of all these factors and the extent to which they cause dropout of boys from public secondary schools.

A White House Secretariat office report (2010) quoted president Obama announcing that the rate at which boys were dropping out of school was a question of concern to all the stakeholders in the education sector. He argued that the Americans could not ignore this big problem of the boy-child dropping out of school. He therefore called on all the stakeholders; parents, guardians, teachers, school principals, students, business leaders and elected officials to come up and end the drop out crisis in America. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have been struggling in finding out ways of improving their educational systems in order to achieve the Education for All goals (E.F.A.). These countries have laid strategies to meet the set goals by 2015. These strategies are like offering free primary education, providing lunch and snacks in marginalized areas and monitoring whether the children attend school regularly. This has motivated children from poor families to go to school (Wang & Fredricks, 2013). This effort eventually has attracted the attention of the donors from various parts of the world especially in the developed countries, who include World Education Forum, UNICEF and WHO (World Bank, 2004). The most affected are boys from poor families and orphans hence drop out from public secondary schools (Cameron, 2009) a scenario which has prompted the researcher to carry out this study.

School dropout has become a major educational problem in developing countries. It has been noticed that there has been a high enrollment and low completion cycle especially for boys in public secondary schools (Oteyo & Kariuki, 2009). Dropout rates depend on the number of children enrolled and so in countries where there is low initial enrolment, actual number of students who drop may be lower than where initial enrolment is high (Joshi, 2010). In Malawi, dropout rates are still high though free primary education was started earlier (Siddhu, 2011) than in any other African country. High enrolment in Malawi led to poor education because there weren't enough teachers to handle the students and therefore temporal teachers were employed to curb this problem. This made many students especially boys, lose interest in school hence dropping out. The main reason of boy-child drop out in Malawi is lack of interest in learning and illness of family members (Smith, 2011).



In Kenya, the dropout of boys in public secondary schools draws back the achievement of Vision 2030 which was set by the Kenyan government to industrialize the nation and to improve education and training for all (Social-Vision, 2030). This leads to wastage of potential human resources necessary for development (Business Daily, 2013). The initiation of free primary education by the government in 2003 and free day secondary school education in 2008 resulted into increased school enrolment but boys are still dropping out of school due to factors like poverty, insecurity, lack of basic needs and natural catastrophes (Symeou, Martínez-González, & Álvarez-Blanco, 2012).

## **2.2 Socio-Economic Factors Causing Boy-child Dropout in General**

Socio-economic factors are the factors that emanate from societies social and economic way of life that affect the learners schooling (Kimondo, 2007). There are many socio-economic factors that may cause boy-child drop out of school. They include lack of finances to support education, child labour, home responsibilities, parental ignorance, orphanage, peer pressure, drug abuse, HIV and AIDS, parental level of education, parental income, family size and lack of motivation on the learners side. In this study, the socio-economic factors to be investigated are parental income, parental level of education and the family size where the boy-child comes from. Much has been done on girl child education to the neglect of the boy-child. Much has also been done about dropout in boarding secondary schools but not in public secondary schools.

Initial academic skills go hand in hand with the home environment where low literacy environment and chronic stress affects the child negatively in his/her academic skills. If the child is affected negatively his/her performance also suffers; this may lead to demotivation within the student (boy) causing him to drop out of school (Alkens & Barbarin 2008). Murugi (2008) observes that over one million children are out of school and in Kenya more than half of this number is boys. This is very important because the level of education of parents plays a major role in the education of any child. Osagi (2010) says that the education level of parents is a determiner of how long their children will stay in school and how they will perform and excel in the future. These parents know the benefits of education and can therefore afford to emphasize the importance of school and hence maintain their children in school thus reducing their sons' dropout.

Uneducated parents on the other hand do not see the benefits of education since they did not attend school and are still surviving. Bohon & Garber (2009) in their study discovered that boys whose mothers are uneducated have a 40% dropout. The uneducated parents cannot give adequate advice, guidance and counseling to their children on the importance of education and hence dropout of their sons from school. A study done by the Ministry of Education (MOEST, 2007) revealed that parents with professional qualifications ensure that their children remain in school.

On the other hand parents with low level of education have negative attitude towards education because they do not see its immediate benefits. In addition, educated parents have improved financial status and improved quality of life and therefore they act as role models to their sons and encourage them to remain in school (Polesel, Nizi &

Kurantowicz, 2011). This study therefore intends to find out whether parental level of education has any effect on boy-child drop out from public secondary schools

Parental income according to Englund, Egeland, & Collins (2008), is an important factor in determining whether access to education is costly. According to a survey done by World Bank as stated in the Daily Nation of May 8th 2012, 51% of Kenyans live below poverty line. Barr and Parrett (2007) said that many people find it hard to support education through the paying of fees and this leads to boy-child drop out. Due to poverty, parents are unable to meet both direct and indirect costs of schooling which forces them to withdraw the boys from the school system so as to contribute to family income.

Although education in public secondary schools in Kenya is free, parents have to incur the costs of uniforms and other educational expenses like the project funds, payment for lunch and purchase of text books (Fall & Roberts, 2012). When the boy stays at home, he contributes to family income through working and therefore the parent weighs the cost and benefits of keeping him at home to work or sending him to school (Souza, 2007). The boys who are not able to pay for fees are normally on and off during the school days and as a result they are bored, unmotivated and eventually drop out of school (Huggins, Randel & Shirley, 2007).

Boys whose parents are poor drop out from school earlier compared to boys whose parents are rich (Kalipeni, 2009), while boys whose parent's income is low drop out of school because this low income from their parents is spent on food which is more basic than education. These boys may drop out of school to assist their parents in the casual work that will provide food for them hence become permanent drop outs (Hardley, 2010). On the other hand students from well to do families are likely to succeed in education because their parents can afford to meet direct costs of education of their sons (Osagi, 2010).

UNESCO report (2005), states that the fact that people are not sure whether they will get any income is a barrier to education. This cost sharing policy shifted a big burden of financing education to individual parents hence making supporting education very hard. The students who are not able to pay for the charges are normally on and off during the school days and as a result, they get bored and unmotivated hence dropout of school. Jonker (2006) says that the students whose parents cannot afford cost of some of the educational expenses tend to go to school irregularly and in the long run drop out of school.

Kirazoğlu (2009) says that parents who are not able to support their sons in education force them to drop out of school and join casual works like, being house boys, gardeners, herd boys all what is termed as child labor because the child had not completed the secondary school cycle. Most of these casual jobs were mainly done by the boys and that is why more boys than girls drop out of public secondary schools. UNICEF (2004) outlines the role poverty plays in boys' dropout and points out that governments have become increasingly aware that boys are more likely to be alienated from school if they come from poor economic backgrounds. This study was therefore

investigating how parental income contributed to boy-child drop out in public secondary school.

### **2.3 Influence of learner characteristics on boy child dropout rates**

Learners need to be motivated both in the home and school environment. When learners are motivated, they manage stress and are also eager to initiate learning activities, they are willing to take tasks, they remain involved in a learning task and they show a commitment (Coetzee, Louw & Hawksley, 2002). Teachers and parents should be aware that motivation in the home environment and school is an important factor to encourage learners to continue with their studies.

The older the boy is, the greater the chances of not completing the basic cycle of basic school (Cameron, 2005). This is due to the fact that for older children, the opportunity cost of schooling increases significantly and with this a pressure to work or to get married (UNESCO, 2005). Boys who performed poorly tend to stay away from school more frequently; weak academic performance often leads to grade repetition; repeaters and underachievers attend school intermittently; and this somewhat circular chain of events is eventually broken when learners dropout of the Education system (Hunt, 2008). Boys who suffer from ill health and poor nutrition are inclined to attend school irregularly, are more likely to repeat grades, and eventually drop out.

High levels of indiscipline at school are indicative of boys becoming disengaged with school and this eventually leads to drop out. In a study by Wamalwa (2011) on indiscipline cases reported among boys in Dagoretti District, that the boy child demonstrated aggressive behaviour such as bullying and fighting. Involvement with such groups reportedly provides an additional factor that pulls young males away from school. Results showed a negative association between peer acceptance and school dropout, and that acceptance into a violent group compromises educational attainment with disadvantaged boys (Staff and Kreager, 2008). Even though individual factors are personal, they could be affected by other factors, such as teacher-learner interactions, school rules and interactions with parents (Ou and Reynolds, 2008).

According to the MOE (2014) school principals were warned against forced repetition and expulsion of students on the basis of academic performance. The ministry noted that cases of students being forced to repeat had received attention from the local media and that some schools even set grades for children to achieve before they were allowed to proceed to the next class while in others such students were forced to look for alternative schools. Forced repetition was contrary to the Basic Education Act (2013) and the constitutional rights of children to education which clarified that no student admitted in a school was to be held back in any class or expelled from school.

In some instances issues of students forced to repeat landed in court. The *Daily Nation Newspaper* on 30th January, 2014 reported that the High court in Nakuru ordered a school in the county to re-admit two students it had expelled for defying a directive to repeat. The parents of the two students sued Mary Mount Secondary School after the administration refused the pair to proceed to form four. The parents argued that the

decision to repeat form three was illegal and designed to deny the students a chance at education and ruin their future.

#### **2.4 Influence of socio - cultural factors on the boy child dropout rates**

Poverty and economic challenges of the time contribute to lack of motivation, negative self-concept in terms of academic abilities, failure at school, domestic violence, delinquency, and higher dropout rates (Prinsloo, 2004). The changing nature of the family affects schooling access (Edet and Ekegre, 2010). Boys whose parents monitor and regulate their activities, provide emotional support, encourage independent decision making and are generally more involved in their schooling are less likely to drop out of school (Russel, 2001).

The number of children within a household is important in many cases and can be a significant determinant of access (Boyle, Brock, Mace, and Sibbons, 2002), but research differs on the impact of household size on access and drop out. Some studies indicate that with larger household sizes (and in particular numbers of children) the financial burden/potential workload is greater; children are less likely to attend school, and often dropout. However, with more children in the household, jobs can be spread between them and siblings more likely to attend, e.g. in Ethiopia (Colclough et al, 2000). Bereavement amongst family members and in particular parents often makes children more vulnerable to dropout, non-enrolment, late enrolment and slow progress (Nyamukapa and Gregson, 2005). Orphan-hood often exacerbates financial constraints for poorer households and increases the demands for child labour and dropout. This is more pronounced in the era of HIV/AIDS (Hunter and May, 2003)

Cultural practices have always favored boys in the African community. These include practices such as inheritance, being the head of the family, owning assets etc. Boy child dropout can there be attributed to the notion that the boy child is the inheritor of the property in the home leads to the boy child dropout. Cultural practices such as livestock farming influence the boy learner dropout so as to take care of the parents' animals. Other cultural norms were, it wrong for a boy to show any form of weakness and emotions is unacceptable. May lead to emotional strife hence leading to the boys dropping out as they are not expected to show or share their problems. On the other hand, crusaders of equity have placed a lot of on girl child education in many countries so as to meet the (EFA Goals, 2000) leading to the ignoring of boy child education.

Social factors such as diseases also lead to boy child dropout. According to Coetzee, Hawksley & Louw (2002), the Human Immune Virus (HIV) affects different people in different ways. Coetzee, Hawksley & Louw (2002) state that most young people living with HIV and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in Kenya contracted the virus through sexual intercourse. As Broadus and Bryan, (2008) point out orphans may put pressure on older relatives who become their primary care givers. However, in most cases the older relatives get tired due to poverty and the older siblings are forced to take the adult roles. This leads to school dropout among the boys.

Having a big family may lead to boys drop out of school especially if the family income is low. Symeou, Martinez & Alvarez (2012) say that many children especially

boys from big sized family's dropout of school to work for income to support their families. This comes as a result of parents being unable to provide basic needs to their children and hence force the older sons to drop, search for casual jobs and help them (parents) bring up their children in the big family. Once the boys get these casual jobs which they can do after school they feel that they have become adults and therefore drop out completely from public secondary schools (Oteyo & Kariuki, 2009).

For a big family in these economically constrained times, it is hard to provide the basic needs. This will therefore lead boys to dropout so that they can help their parents with providing for their siblings. If getting food is a problem, then how would it be possible to cater for education which is more expensive (Mudemb, 2013). This study was to find out how the boy-child's family size influences his dropout from public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county. Boys from big families may be encouraged by their parents to drop out of school to go to work to supplement the family income and make it easier for the parents to take care of the young siblings (Symeou *et al.*, 2012).

Research done by the Ministry of Education (MoEST) in 2006 showed that as boys grow older their needs increase and if they come from a big family their parents may not be able to provide for their needs and therefore they might drop out of school to search for casual jobs so as to cater for their own needs. This study was done to establish whether family size is a factor that make boy-child drop out of public secondary school or whether there are other reasons causing the drop out.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The research adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate the factors influencing boy-child drop out from public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county, Nyandarua county. Rumberger & Rotermund (2012) point out that descriptive survey design is a present oriented methodology and is used to investigate population by selecting samples to analyze and discover occurrences then data obtained can be used to determine specific characteristics of a group. The design was suitable for the study because it was used to explore and evaluate in details the determinants of boy-child drop out from public secondary schools. Design was selected because the study entailed asking a large number of people questions in form of questionnaires.

Nyandarua county is located in the central part of Kenya. The county borders several counties; Laikipia to the North, Nyeri to the East, Kiambu to the South, Murang'a to the South East and Nakuru to the West. Administratively, the county has 5 sub-counties (Kinangop, Kipipiri, Ol'joroOrok, Ndaragwa, and Ol'Kalou), 25 Wards, 25 Divisions and 70 Locations. On education, the secondary school net enrolment rate is slightly lower than the primary school net enrolment rate. It is 73 percent and over 15,000 secondary school-age children out of school. The Secondary School Pupil-Teacher Ratio is 21. The county should continue to promote education to scale up the number of educated young people. The study was carried out in Kinangop Sub-county,

Nyandarua county. This area was chosen because the boy-child dropout was high as observed by the researcher (Kinangop Sub-county DEO's enrolment report).

The target population for the study was 26 public secondary schools, 26 principals from these schools, 208 class teachers from Kinangop Sub-county, Nyandarua county. The researcher targeted 26 public secondary schools in Kinangop Sub-county, where a sample of 148 respondents comprising of 16 principals and 132 class teachers. The 16 principals were also selected to participate in the study using purposive sampling and simple random sampling to select 132 class teachers. Simple random sampling was used to determine the schools to be selected from the target population. This technique was used so that each and every school in the target population would have an equal chance of participation. The sample size was 148 respondents including school principals and class teachers.

Data was collected using questionnaires and document analysis. Self-administered questionnaires were filled by the principals and class teachers. The main reason as to why questionnaires were used is that they are easy to administer and economical to use in terms of time and money since they often have standardized answers that make it simple to compute and analyze data (Begi, 2009). There one set of questionnaires for class teachers and principals. Questionnaires have the advantage of being straight forward and an appropriate way of collecting information needed from numerous respondents. Questionnaires are also suitable for the study because it is appropriate to gather information from an extensive area. More so it is relatively cheap and fast method of collecting data (Smith, 2012).

Document analysis was based on records obtained from the principals' offices in the selected schools. These documents included class registers and admission records. The main purpose of examining these records was to establish the trend of boys' enrollment in Form one, retention rate in the school and dropout rate in the school in these years. The information gathered was basically made to supplement data collected using the questionnaires and interviews.

Validity is the extent to which research results can be accurately interpreted and generalized to other populations. It is the extent to which research instruments measure what they are intended to measure (Oso & Onen, 2009). The researcher consulted the research experts who ascertained the content in the questionnaires, whether they have the right content and if correctly put, hence improving instruments validity.

The researcher used the test-re-test method to measure the reliability of the developed questionnaires. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 and above was assumed to reflect the internal reliability of the instruments (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The entire questionnaire deemed as reliable after several typographical errors and omissions detected are corrected in the instrument confirming that it was sufficient to be used in the main study.

Before analyzing the data, the researcher first checked how the questionnaires were answered and checked if they were completely filled with accurate answers. The researcher also checked on the uniformity of the interpretations of the questions

answered and this helped in the compilation and coding of the data for analysis (Smith, 2012). The data collected from the field was coded and processed by computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V23). Data was analyzed using inferential statistics to analyze relationship between variables. This was done using multiple regression analysis.

#### 4. Results

A multiple regression model was used to explore the predictors of boy-child drop out from school. From the model, ( $R^2 = .806$ ) showing that socio-economic, socio-cultural and learner characteristics account for 80.6% variation in drop out in public secondary schools as shown in Table 1. The predictor used in the model captured 80.6% variation in the drop out. The change statistics were used to test whether the change in adjusted  $R^2$  is significant using the F-ratio. The model caused adjusted  $R^2$  to change from zero to .806 and this change gave rise to an F- ratio of 186.05, which is significant at a probability of .05.

**Table 1: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.898 <sup>a</sup>	.806	.802	.48073	.806	186.053	3	134	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Learner characteristics, Socio-economic, Social-cultural.

##### 4.1 Model ANOVA

The analysis of variance was used to test whether the model could significantly fit in predicting the outcome than using the mean as shown in (Table 2). The regression model with socio-economic, socio-cultural and learner characteristics determinants as a predictor was significant ( $F=186.05$ ,  $p$  value =0.001) shows that there is a significant influence of determinants on drop out of boys in public secondary schools. The F statistics is used as a test for the model goodness of fit, showing that there is a significant relationship between socio-economic, socio-cultural and learner characteristics and drop out of boys in public secondary schools.

**Table 2: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	128.992	3	42.997	186.053	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	30.968	134	.231		
	Total	159.960	137			

a. Dependent Variable: Drop out.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Learner characteristics, Socio-economic, Social-cultural.

## 4.2 Regression Coefficients

In addition, the  $\beta$  coefficients for factors as independent variable were generated from the model, in order to test the hypotheses of the study. The t-test was used as a measure to identify whether the dropout determinants as predictor was making a significant contribution to the model. Table 3 gave the estimates of  $\beta$ -value and the contribution of each predictor to the model. The  $\beta$ -value for socio-economic, socio-cultural and learner characteristics had a positive coefficient, depicting positive relationship with drop out as summarized in the model as:

$$Y = 0.229 + 0.345X_1 + 0.412X_2 + .285X_3 + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

Where:

Y = Drop out,

X<sub>1</sub> = socio-cultural,

X<sub>2</sub> = socio-economic,

X<sub>3</sub> = Learner characteristics,

$\epsilon$  = error term

**Table 3: Regression Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.229	.141		1.620	.107
	Social-cultural	.345	.106	.301	3.268	.001
	Socio-economic	.412	.093	.372	4.440	.000
	Learner characteristics	.285	.078	.272	3.653	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Drop out.

The study hypothesized that there was no significant relationship between socio-cultural and drop out of boys in public secondary schools. The findings indicated there was a positive significant relationship between socio-cultural ( $\beta_3=0.345$  and  $p<0.05$ ) and drop out of boys in public secondary schools. This implied that socio-cultural affects drop out positively. A big family therefore influences dropout of boy-child from public secondary school and this concurs with Symeon et al., (2012) who stated that, having a big family size may lead to boys drop out of school especially if the family income is low. From the findings, it was concluded that boys from Kinangop sub-county dropped out of school especially those from big families due to inadequate resources for the large number of children in school.

The findings indicted that there was a positive significant relationship between socio-economic and drop out ( $\beta_2=0.412$  and  $p<0.05$ ). Therefore, an increase in socio-economic leads to a rise in drop out of boys in public secondary schools. This low-income influence to dropout found in Kinangop sub-county is also supported by Mukudi (2004) who argued that 79% of school dropouts are from low income households. The findings from the study also concur with Kalipeni (2009) argument



that boys whose parents are poor drop out from school easier compared to boys whose parents are rich. They drop out from school because this low income is barely enough to buy food which is more basic than education. It was also reported by the respondents that parents from Kinangop sub-county force their sons to drop out of school because of their low income. This fact agrees with Kirazoglu (2009) who argued that parents who are not able to support their sons in education force them to drop out of school and join casual workers.

There was a positive significant relationship between learner characteristics strategy and drop out ( $\beta_3=0.285$  and  $p<0.05$ ). Therefore, learner characteristics influenced drop out of boys in public secondary schools positively. Being unprofessional is a state that will likely not make someone a role model for the boys. This fact concurs with the research done by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST 2007) on professionalism and child modeling. This research argued that parents with professional qualifications ensure that their children remain in school, and on the other hand parents with low levels of education have negative attitude towards education because they do not see its immediate benefits.

The predictors socio-economic had the most significant positive relationship with drop out ( $\beta=0.412$ ,  $t= 4.44$ ;  $p= 0.001$ ). The second most significant influence on drop out was socio-cultural ( $\beta=0.345$ ,  $t= 3.27$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). Finally, learner characteristics had the least significant influence on drop out ( $\beta=0.285$ ,  $t=3.65$ ;  $p =0.000$ ). These findings indicated that socio-economic, socio-cultural and learner characteristics had significant relationship with drop out of boys in public secondary schools. This study concurs with Osagi (2010) who argued that the education level of a parent is a determinant of how long their children will stay in school, perform and excel in future. Having only secondary education of the fathers is not enough to motivate the boys complete their secondary school cycle. This is because the father who had attained secondary school education might not become a professional.

## 5. Conclusions

Majority of residents of Kinangop sub-county live below poverty line, a factor which pushes many boys to drop out from public secondary schools. Most of the mothers had no income at all for they were not working hence conclusion that these parents live below poverty line. The learners drop out due to nonpayment of school levies by the parents hence making them to be sent home for the same. Poverty in the family backgrounds influences the learners to drop out of school so that they can also play a role in the income generation activities. This may be discouraging to the learners hence making them to opt to drop out of school.

Cultural practices such as circumcision and inheritance contribute towards the boys dropping out from public secondary schools in Kinangop Sub county. This is because the boys believe they are adults once they are circumcised and so may not feel like they fit in the school system any more hence make them to drop out. This is

especially common in learners who are older for the class and hence other factors also come into play.

Learner characteristics influence the dropout rate of boys in public secondary schools in Kinangop sub-county. A boy with learning difficulties lacks the motivation to remain in school. This is because it leads to low self-esteem hence leading to demotivated learners that drop out of school. The study concludes that the socio-economic, socio-cultural and learner characteristics influence boy-child drop out from public secondary schools.

## **6. Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

- The parents should be encouraged to come up with new strategies of increasing their earnings so as to increase their income and be able to pay fees for their sons. This can be communicated during parents' meetings in the school. To increase their income, they can be trained on practicing alternative farming.
- The principals of the schools should come up with strategies to promote completion rate among boys in public secondary schools like motivating the boys, guiding and counseling them and starting boy-child welfare that will look into problems faced by boys in school.
- The learners should only engage in income generating activities during free time as opposed to during school sessions. Advocacy should be carried out to encourage the boy learners to keep off from casual labour and motorcycle riding during school days.
- Poverty contributes to dropping out of school. This is because, unless the basic needs for the learners are met, they may not be motivated to seek education. Consequently, the parents need to take their parental roles seriously and keep their children in school.
- Culture should be appreciated at all costs but it should not be an impediment to education and should go hand in hand. The community elders should be advised to encourage the circumcised children to attend school even after the practice. Cultural practices though good should be practiced in moderation so as to help the boys to understand it's a rite of passage but not an indicator of adulthood. Consequently, the boys should not take on adult roles and remain in school throughout their studies.
- Learners should be encouraged so as to have high self-esteem and self-motivation to learn no matter the circumstances surroundings their families. The teachers should also learn how to handle the students so as to make them concentrate in their studies leading to enjoyment of learning.
- Boys have the same challenges as girls and they also need proper care so as to prevent them from dropping out of school at all costs. Boys too can get emotional

and they need to be understood so as to have high self-esteem and be motivated to learn no matter the circumstances.

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